

The Hampshire College



Omen

The Omen

Volume 9, Number 3

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(Hampshire Postcard)

Policy Box!

The Omen accepts from any member of the Hampshire community. We will not edit anything you write, as long as you are willing to be responsible for what you say. Libel, which we personally find amusing and entertaining for countless hours is just not able to be printed in this forum.

Submissions, which includes just about anything involving the Hampshire community in some way (news, opinions, artwork, etc.), are due on Wednesday nights at 8:00 to the editor of the section in which you wish to appear, or to Jordan Strauss (J-309, box 1007), or Brenden Tamilio (C-413, box 1029). We prefer submissions on disk (IBM or HIGH DENSITY Macintosh), although hard copy is okay as well. Label your stuff well and it will make it back to you with no problem.

So give us your news, commentary, short fiction, comics, satire, poetry, art, bulletins, questions, and anything else you can think of, and your beloved community rag will dish it back 700 times. What better way to be heard?
*Submissions may be edited for grammar

“Beauty is just a light switch away”

-Kate Washburn

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Jordan, Being Diplomatic:

Welcome to the first installment of volume ten of the Hampshire College Omen. For nearly six years, The Omen has served as a community forum for the Hampshire college campus. Anyone can submit, and all submissions (or at least, all reasonable/intelligent ones) are printed. Our charter, the document defining our objective, and why we receive funding, is on page nine of this issue, but for a quick overview of policies, check the policy box on the opposite page. The Omen accepts all forms of work, and we welcome criticism in all shapes and sizes. Past issues of The Omen have included everything from detailed explanations of the Women's Center budget to strange tales involving

sheep and certain administrative figures. On the subject of criticism, we do request that before you pick up your pen to tear something you may have read to shreds, or dismiss us entirely because you might have found an article substandard or otherwise inadequate, you remember that all work is submission-based. If you don't like what you read, change it by writing something yourself. The Omen is a valuable and often unrecognized tool for both the communication of ideas and the expression of opinion.

We are in the process of reorganizing, as key members of staff graduated last year, so the next few issues may be sporadic. We hope to be on track and weekly again by early October. If

you wish to submit or help out, drop your articles off/talk with anyone listed on the opposite page by 8:00 pm Wednesday nights. The Omen goes to press every Monday, and barring unforeseen circumstances, should be available every Thursday.

This issue is quite a bit shorter than regular (last year's average length was 20 pages), but we were short on both submissions and time. Normally, this space would be occupied by a standard-issue editorial (in this issue starting on page three). We hope you enjoy this issue, and request that you please bear with us over the next few weeks.

Jordan Strauss, Editor in Chief

*5 Got some empty space
7 Do not know what to do
5 Due at press 10 mins.*

The Editors

Gender, Feminism, and Domestic

First, allow me to quote this article which appeared courtesy of Bert Cattivera in the April 12, 1997 issue of *The (glorious) OMEN*. Bert (Ph. D, dontcha know) begins by giving some background on why he felt his submission was necessary:

"Women often come to me for advice on how to ensnare the man of their dreams. I have compiled a few helpful tips about how this delicate operation should be orchestrated."

(*The OMEN* 4/12/97 p18, paragraph 1)

Bert goes on to list Date Rape, Domestic Abuse, and personifying tequila as the sure fire ways to get a man. I want to be clear from the get-go that this letter of response is aimed primarily at presenting opinion which opposes the jocular generalities presented in Bert's (Ph. D in what?) first and second suggestion. As a woman, perhaps I should not take it upon myself to oppose a list of suggestions aimed at describing what men want. But also as a woman, I feel it impossible to ignore the cultural insensitivity lodged in the two aforementioned list items. After explaining his position as an oft exploited advice source for heterosexual women Bert (Ph.D in lack of knowledge in gender issues ? hmmmmm) continues with his suggestions

1. Date Rape. Slip a couple of Rohypnols (or your preferred Mickey Finn) into your desired man's Martini. Take advantage of him as he writhes on the floor in a drugged stupor. The beauty of this method is that he is unlikely to remember a thing. the downside is that he may lose control and start shitting all over the place.

2. Put on a wife-beater and resort to some old-fashioned domestic violence. Men will find this sexy, and hey, if women are so concerned about attaining equal rights they should begin by making their pres-

ence felt in the field of domestic violence. Domestic violence should not discriminate by gender. Discrimination is an ugly thing. In the interests of political correctness, the term "wife-beater" should be replaced by " non gender-specific domestic violence shirt. "

(*The Omen* 4/12/97 p18 paragraphs 2 and 3, respectively)

Now, aside from the fact that many of Mr. Bert's sentences don't seem to make sense (" put on a wife-beater " ? ? ? ! " non gender-specific domestic violence shirt " ? !) these two items on his list of suggestions are insulting to the cause of trying to understand, lessen, and end problems, gender discrimination, and power dynamics in relationships.

To begin with, using Date Rape as even a joke of a suggestion to ANYONE or worse AN AUDIENCE OF ANYONES on how to get the person they're lusting after simply proves a point. It has long been posited that when all is said and done, and victims find a voice to name individual perpetrators of sexual violence, we will find that it is a social disease as well one resting on individuals. Part of this social affliction resides in the inability of men and women alike to think that sexual and relationship violence is a serious problem that affects them and the people they know in direct and indirect ways. When we begin, as a generation and society, to see that, I think it will not be long before we phase out jokes about date rape just as we are the beginning of a generation that is less likely to tolerate racist and homophobic jokes.

I can appreciate that a tense subject, like relationship violence, can benefit from a certain amount of satire to lighten the load of the issue. I can appreciate that satire of the form of social and political criticism can often serve the purpose of presenting people with the infor-

mation in a mode that appears to be less intimidating but will eventually jar them into questioning their assumptions. I can appreciate that it is possible that this was how these two items on Bert's (certainly not a Ph. D in journalism) list were intended. I would say though, that if that were the case, it failed miserably.

If these suggestions were meant to tweak my notion of what was acceptable and non-acceptable behavior between two (or three, or four - hey you never know) people in a relationship all it did was strengthen my belief that the reason physical and sexual violence continues to exist and be viewed as accepted practice in relationships is because many of our social cues lead us to the conclusion that it isn't our problem and therefore, we might as well go ahead and joke about it, because it's a ridiculous idea, right?

Furthermore as an individual who has experienced relationship violence on a number of different levels, I would say that Bert's (Ph.D in how not to write coherent sentences) submission is distressing personally. It makes a mockery of the victimization that men and women have dealt with and will continue to deal with at the hands of the people they trusted and cared about.

I suppose that my chief criticism of Bert's (Ph. D?! Yeah, and my ass has more than one hole in it) list is that it ill fits the only possible category that would deign it non-offensive in my eyes. If it were meant as social criticism, I suspect that there would have been more clues to alert me to the author's intent. Satire is generally given to supposing absolutely incredulous ideas as its foundation. Example: In Swift's *A Modest Proposal*, he suggests that eating Irish children might solve the desperate poverty that he knew his readers were grappling with. To the British and Irish, the idea of cannibalism was so heinous, that they

Violence: A Critique

might immediately understand that Swift was after more in his document than to see infants roasted on the spit. I suspect that Swift's intent might not have been as well recognized if he had suggested the option of eating young'uns to a non-European group that practiced cannibalism or had practiced it in the recent past. They, in fact, might have thought it a splendidly practical idea. My point here is that suggesting Date Rape as a "how to get the one you want" technique to a society where date rape is still a serious and prevalent problem is a little like satirizing the poverty problem in terms of eating children to cannibals. It might work, or it might be a dangerous force of suggestion.

Am I saying here that I think that someone is going to read this article and immediately go out and try to buy roofies on the black market? No, I doubt that the effects would be that direct. If they were, I think the problem of date rape, sexual assault, and of her relationship violence would be more easily solved. What I am saying is that jokes like these are crude, they entail the possibility of de-valuing to anyone who has any real experience with relationship violence, and they are simply a continuation of the societal messages which too often fail to flag relationship violence as a dangerous problem.

My second criticism of Bert and his article comes in his second suggestion. (Kinda handy that they correlate, huh? I assure you, I planned it that way.) This would be the (allow me to paraphrase) " beat the one you love, they'll think it's sexy " item. This discourse also included brief commentary on gender equality and domestic violence wherein it was mentioned that the former could be achieved if only

women would begin to perpetrate the latter on men. Well, well, well. Surprise! I have almost all of the same problems with this suggestion as I had with the last.

To begin with, it is neither helpful nor is it tasteful to use domestic violence as even a visual image of bringing one person closer to another. Physical violence alienates both the victim and the perpetrator - from each other, and from their support systems. Furthermore, power dynamics within the context of a relationship are yet another problem that society loves to ignore and cover up with snide and disbelieving remarks. Bert has just proved my point here.

Similar to my remarks on the issue of date rape, I would say that our generation and society as a whole is unlikely to receive this advice as an actual counsel to go beat their lust-object up. What I do think is that people will subconsciously file this in the back of their heads where statistics add up into attitudes. If someone is presented with evidence that domestic violence is a joke for long enough, they will almost certainly lose any propensity for sensitivity to these issues sooner or later.

Bert, I will admit, is right on one account. There should be gender equality in the realm of domestic violence. However, gender equality would mean that power dynamics no longer played an emotional role in a couples decision making and manner of relating to one another. Gender equality does not mean that women should beat men and push them around for a few hundred years until the scales are even. Although this is a tempting, eye for an eye , hands on approach to equality (do you think we could get Lemelson money for implementing

this? nah.) it perpetuates the attitude that power dynamics are a necessary ingredient in any relationship. And that perpetuates the problem of domestic violence in general. Bad Bert. No treat.

As to Bert's third suggestion, I say more power to you! Bert details that if a women were to coat her bare breasts with salt, soak the rest of her skin with tequila, sing Leaving Las Vegas and, " you know where to out the lemon, " then that women would become instantly irresistible. Personally, I would be afraid of open flames if I were doused with tequila, but hey, whatever fills your twinkie. And, well, I guess I'd be concerned because salt is really hard to vacuum up and can irritate skin. But, really, whatever blows up your skirt pal. Finally, a warning, if women try this procedure and by some miracle it manages to arouse the man of their desires , just be sure you remove the lemon before you do anything. Lemon juice is full of bundles of acid. OW! Other than that, if the two people involved are both into it and into each other, then I say go for it.)

In conclusion, I would like to say that my entire goal in writing this was simply to have it written and disseminated to the community. I am not looking for an apology, or even for support. I recognize that just as it is my right to have a printed opinion about date rape and physical abuse, it is your right to have one as well. I want only for people to have information to the contrary so that they know it exists. Thank you.

- Christie Veitch, Contributor

A Rebuttal

Dear Christie,

How regrettable it is that you are unwilling to or incapable of recognizing tongue-in-cheek humor when applied to serious issues. You mistakenly believe that I am complicit in the perpetuation of social plagues I find atrocious.

You write that my "dis-course also included a brief commentary on gender equality and domestic violence wherein it was mentioned that the former could be achieved if only women would begin to perpetuate the latter on men." Not intended as a social or political manifesto, rather my article was written as a humorous portrayal of the absurdities it suggested. It is genuinely depressing to me that some members of the flock are unable to laugh due to hypersensitivity disorder (another social disease) coupled with the comforting illusion of moral superiority.

Fortunately, you warn women that (a) alcohol is flammable (ye gods!) and (b) lemons contain citric acid (surprise!) because you reason that women are too stupid to know this. The community should consider itself lucky that you are here to alert it about such matters.

You write indignantly, "I think it will not be long before we phase out jokes about date rape just as we are the beginning of a generation that is less likely to tolerate racist and homophobic jokes."

I like it how you skillfully avoid actual libel while insinuating that I am in favor of racism and homophobia (where did you obtain the Ph. D in Cowardly Writing?). Your hope that we "phase out jokes" is revealing. Undoubtedly journalists, and humorists in particular) should be persecuted at every opportunity. At this point I stopped reading your offensive response as it was too long

and extraordinarily confused. Possibly you have a Ph. D in Verbal Wanking. It is notable that my article made fun of date rape committed against MEN. I don't know if you are aware, but this is not a very prevalent problem in this community. I am, however, deeply sorry if I have offended any man who is a domestic violence and/or date rape victim.

Christie, your response was misguided and reactionary. I would only hope that people are bright enough to recognize humor when it is blatantly presented to them and that they are not too jaded or "morally pure" to enjoy it. This would not cause serious problems to magically vanish, but it certainly couldn't hurt. Thank you for taking the illspent time to respond to my piece.

—Bert Cattivera, Omen Staffer

Jeff's Summer Vacation

What did you do this summer? Did you do anything exciting? Take this safe, fun, and confidential quiz to compare your bomb-ass summer to mine.

1. Which of these concerts did you attend this summer?

- a. Babyface
- b. Tonic
- c. Boston

2. Which of these careers did you pursue this summer?

- a. Telemarketer for Satan's regime
- b. Matador
- c. Employee in an

imported cheese shop

3. Which did you consider to be the best movie you saw?

- a. Spawn
- b. How to be a Playa
- c. Men in Black

4. The brand of beer you most likely consumed this summer was...

- a. Guinness

- b. Sharp's
- c. Busch Light

5. The best book you read this summer was...

- a. The Road Less Traveled by M. Scott Peck
- b. (illiterate)
- c. High Fidelity by Nick

Hornby

6. The furthest you drove from home this summer was the state of...

- a. Connecticut
- b. Wisconsin
- c. Kentucky

7. The most haute couture activity you undertook this summer was...

- a. Attend a lecture on the political ramifications of (insert any movement during the last 300 years)
- b. Got really, really good at Bocci
- c. Ate hummus

8. The "_____ for Dummies" book (you know...Windows for Dummies, etc.) that you most often

leafed through at your boring job was

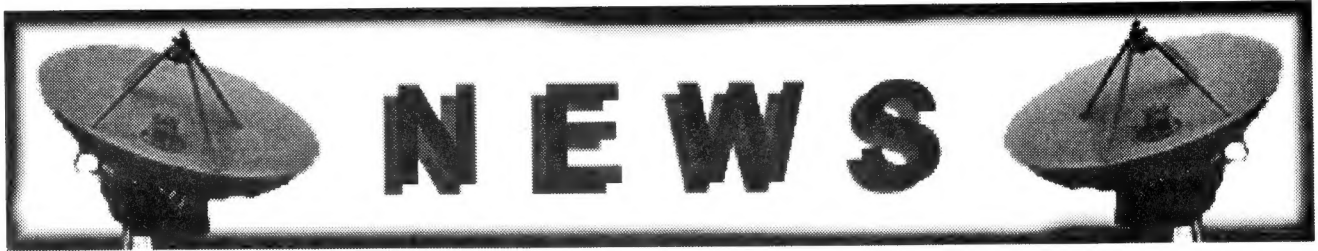
- a. ACC Basic Service for Dummies
- b. "Your Mama" Jokes for Dummies
- c. Red Wine for Dummies

9. The one thing you didn't do this summer but really hope to accomplish next summer is... a. Write the Great American Novel, except in Russian

- b. Learn to change the oil in your car
- c. Find a place that sells New Coke

If you answered "c" to at least five of these, your summer wanted to be my summer, but it just wasn't going to happen. If you answered "c" to at least seven, let's shoot the shit sometime. If you answered "c" to all nine questions, I'd say, "Man, you had a lame summer".

Jeff Barnett, Omen Staffer



Who's Down With OPP? The Sheep

The sheep are gone. The Hampshire flock of 89 became infected with Johnes Disease and Opine Progressive Pneumonia (OPP). When two sheep tested positive June 2, the flock was auctioned for slaughter June 28.

Johnes Disease is a micro-organism, a paratuberculosis that affects sheep, cattle, goats and other livestock. It has been dubbed in farming colloquia as "the wasting disease", a chronic infection that prohibits the livestock from gaining weight. It is transmitted through infected animal feces, but symptoms cannot surface for up to 8 years. OPP is spread through fluid contact and the first milk a mother passes to its offspring called colostrum, which provides the lamb with essential antibodies.

Neither of the diseases poses any threat to humans, and the sheep auctioned for slaughter were completely safe for consumption.

Johnes is very easily transposed from one farm to another. A farmer's boot can carry the responsible organism to his farm from the soil of an infected grazing space. Students should be aware of the contagious nature of the disease, as the former sheep grazing fields are being quarantined. Any student walking through the Farm Center should wash their footwear, and

should not wander from the Hampshire Farm Center area into any of the contiguous private farms. The general academic areas of campus are not infected, only places where the sheep have grazed.

Leslie Cox, the new manager of the Hampshire Farm Center described the event as "Somewhat normal in the livestock industry." He said that these are diseases that occur often, and that the sheep could have lived with these two infections, but would have become progressively more unhealthy. The flock would have perpetually reproduced more suffering animals. Cox added "We are being careful, we're a public institution, so we can be over-careful" He stressed that it is not unusual for farmers to auction their livestock and restart from a scratch of healthy animals, characterizing it as "Something you need to do if you're responsible."

The peril of our sheep has not been restricted to our Hampshire community, it became a pressing concern for the town of Amherst and local farmers. Many local farmers purchase hay from our Farm Center, as well as livestock. Although there are no state laws that require any notification regarding the two diseases to state or local authorities, Hampshire contacted the Massachu-

setts Department of Food and Agriculture, and those that participated in the Northeast Organic Farmers' Conference here on Campus before they arrived in early August. Allegedly, the Town of Amherst and many of its farmers were upset that they were not immediately informed.

In the Daily Hampshire Gazette (8/5/97), Cox explained "I don't know anybody yet. This wasn't perceived to need that kind of alarm. We didn't know who we had to go to since these are not reportable diseases" The article praised Hampshire for the measures and actions it took.

Hampshire is not entirely without sheep, however. There are 18 sheep that did not graze with the Hampshire flock. Four of the sheep belong to Nikki Rob, and another 14 owned by Ellen Skillands. The sheep are under quarantine, as is the soil of the Hampshire Farm Center, for 1 year until the Johnes organism is no longer a risk. Hampshire is projecting to have a new flock in the Summer of 1998.

Brenden Tamilio, News Editor

*UMASS Library
Jeff Barnett,
1997*

And God said, "let us boogie down..."

So God decided to have a party. He first created light and darkness, so he could look around at stuff, and that both of these things were pretty cool. He created different elements so that he could have a change of scenery every so often, and additional things just to play with, such as trees, rocks, shrubbery and snakes.

Then God said, "Let the party begin!" He took two handfuls of dust, smacked them together to create a billowing cloud of people, who immediately fell in love with God, and with themselves.

In the midst of this super groovin' eternal party, God stepped up to the microphone and made an announcement. "I have created an amazing game for us all to play. Look around. You will see many, many doors. Behind each door, you will find a unique pleasure of the utmost delight." There was a general stir among the partygoers, excited by God's strong words. God stood three feet taller, at his own will, in order make certain that everybody felt the gravity of what he was about to say. "Of all the doors, only this ONE," he said pointing, "thou shall not enter. Within this door is a beautiful tree, very tempting, but it bears only the fruit of good and evil. One taste, and you will feel terribly, with indigestion and lots of honking."

Everyone looked at this door in awe, for never had they experienced any kind of warning before. The door was relatively unexciting, only remarkable because of the large, glowing "EXIT" sign posted above it.

The eternal party-animals immediately began to investigate God's new portals of bliss. Shouts of joy and pleasure could be heard everywhere. Above the din, however, this chick named Eve heard a whisper from behind the forbidden door. Eve was pretty certain there would be no repercussions if she were to open the door only a crack, and talk to the little voice. Sneaking up to the door, her face shining red from the "EXIT" sign, she turned its knob and looked inside. Within, the floor was covered with weeds and grass, and among

Mat's Machismo Corner

Mat Lauritsen, Omen Staffer

these plants she made out the slithering shape of a serpent. The serpent spoke.

"My child, God was only joking about the danger of this door—it cannot possibly do you damage. Here drink of this." He said this with a distinct motion of his tail, gesturing to a red plastic cup filled with a yellow, frothy substance, apparently having been spouted from a large metal barrel.

This drink looked mighty delicious to the parched Eve. Greedily, she leapt toward the container, and took a mighty slug. She waited a minute or two to see if anything was going to happen, but, when she discovered herself to be fine, she went to find her tall, muscular, surfer boyfriend, Adam, in order share her discovery with him.

Adam trusted Eve in every way. Finding her sitting happily with drink in hand, he wanted to impress her and show his love for her, and drained an entire cup of the "forbidden" substance in one gulp.

They repeated this process several times and smiled innocently at one another. Suddenly, Eve shrieked, "I'm feeling kind of fummy. Ugh! I look gross, my naked body is horrible!"

Adam, shocked, stared down at his own "goofy" body in shame. Quickly they ran to grab some plants with which to make clothing in an effort to cover their genitals. They felt unbearable shame to be seen in their ugly state of nudity. So, they sat fearfully hiding in the bushes.

It was then that God strode into the room in all of his naked glory looking for the missing partiers. "Who told you that you were ugly?" he bellowed to his shy friends concealed in the undergrowth.

Adam immediately blurted, "Eve made me drink!"

Eve slapped him and spurted, "But the snake made me do it!"

God looked at the snake, "Is this true?" feigning anger. The snake just sat still without response.

"Well you can't come back to the party looking like that." With that said, God slammed the door, and resumed his orgasmic life of love, freedom and good old rock'n roll.

Adam and Eve then started to argue, and began the lengthy and inane conversation that you and I call history. Through the course of this "discussion," the "sinful" couple made an entire race of ugly, ashamed beings. These new, unhappy people created a million different types of clothing in order hide themselves, and even manufactured churches and governments that were devoted to the separation of what a person should be ashamed of, and of what one should not.

Then one day, the infamous door burst open. A big guy calling himself Jesus ran into the room and yelled, at the top of his voice, "Come with me! We can all love each other and go back to the party!"

Not understanding his message, the offspring of Adam and Eve nailed him to an artificial tree to die. Jesus hung upon that tree for three whole days before deciding to go back to enjoy himself in the fields of creation. He effortlessly raised himself, and said, "That's it. I am going back whether you guys come with me or not." With that, he did a little dance and returned to the house of God. It was way cool.

Let it be known from this point on, that God is a terrific jokester and has pulled a whopper of a shenanigan upon us all. The people of Adam and Eve apparently have no sense of humor, and have not understood that God was just kidding about banishing them from his wonderful party for any reason. At any time can these distracted individuals enter the mirth and frivolity of God's realm, and leave behind the silly, shameful joke of death.

With help from Carl Dordelman

Our Charter

a. The Omen is a printed community forum for students to express their ideas, opinions, and beliefs. In addition to publishing news, movie and music/show reviews, we also print short fiction and short stories. Anyone is free to submit, and we print all responses to articles. Anything except slander and libel will be published. These guidelines are explained in our policy box.

It should be made clear that The Omen is not a newspaper; when a news story breaks, we try to apply a unique form of storytelling to bring the issue to light as fast as possible; this form may include student commentary, editorial, photo essays, etc. As far as news is concerned, The Omen focuses more on the human aspects and effects of certain events.

b. The Omen is valuable to the

Hampshire community because we are a printed forum for student expression (see a). For the last four years, The Omen has printed all submissions, ranging from commentary on the Hampshire community at large to short fiction. Additionally, The Omen is a weekly student publication; being weekly allows us to break news, discuss timely events such as concerts and movies, and bring an immediate response to ongoing in the student body and administration.

c. Funding is necessary in order to remain weekly; being weekly is expensive, but we feel that the benefits of having a forum such as The Omen outweighs the loss of the requested funding. Additionally, we believe that accepting advertisers to cover the cost of duplication etc. may unduly bias our publication.

d. As far as internal governance is concerned, all major decisions affecting The Omen are discussed and voted on by all Omen members, with veto power allocated to the managing editors. All members are encouraged to play a role in important Omen decisions.

As far as supervision is concerned, each regular Omen section has an editor who is responsible each week for either writing or soliciting an article from the community. These section editors report to the managing editors.

e. As mentioned previously, The Omen is a community forum. Community members are regularly encouraged to submit articles. Those who wish to become members of The Omen need only relay their request to one of the managing editors and attend Omen meetings.

5 Life is really good
7 now that I am home . Bow
5 down before satan

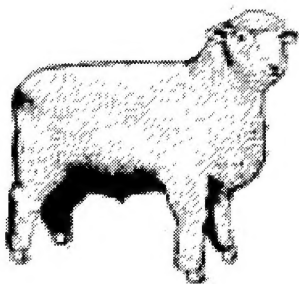
Jordan Strauss,
1997

The Omen

is looking for students interested and knowledgeable in page layout, community reporting, graphic design and photography to help implement a new layout/style for the magazine.

5 Here's a shameless plug
7 We need your ideas so
5 we can conquer Earth

If you have an interest in journalism, incorporating your skills into a community forum, or are looking for a creative way to fulfill that Div II Community Service Requirement, come check out an Omen Staff Meeting (times posted regularly in the post office), or contact:



Jordan Strauss (x4666)
Bren Tamilio (x4459)
Jeff Barnett (x4665)